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**Records of the
Minnesota Superintendency
of Indian Affairs
1849-1856**



NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE
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Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs

Record Group 75

in the National Archives

RECORDS OF THE
MINNESOTA SUPERINTENDENCY OF INDIAN AFFAIRS
1849-1856

On the 9 rolls of this microfilm publication are reproduced four volumes and many unbound records of the Minnesota Superintendency of Indian Affairs, 1849-56.

From 1789 to 1824 Indian affairs were administered in the Office of the Secretary of War. In 1824 a separate Office of Indian Affairs was created in the War Department. In 1849 the Office of Indian Affairs was transferred to the Department of the Interior, and in 1947 it was renamed the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

During the 19th century superintendencies and agencies were the two principal field jurisdictions of the Office of Indian Affairs. Superintendents had general responsibility for Indian affairs in a specific geographical area. Their duties included supervision of relations between the Government and citizens of the United States and the Indian tribes and supervision of the conduct and accounts of the Indian agents within their jurisdictions. Agents were usually responsible for the affairs of one tribe or reservation. Until about 1878 most agents were accountable to the superintendent, although some reported directly to the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Washington, D.C.

The Minnesota Superintendency was established in 1849 with the organization of Minnesota Territory (9 Stat. 403), which included the eastern part that later became North Dakota and South Dakota. The Territorial Governor at St. Paul served as ex officio superintendent throughout the existence of the superintendency. The Indians living in Minnesota Territory were principally Sioux, Chippewa, and Winnebago. There were also some Assiniboin and Mandan Indians, but they had few contacts with the superintendency. When the Minnesota Superintendency was established, the St. Peters Agency (a subagency from 1848 to 1851) and the Winnebago Agency were assigned to it. These two agencies had been under the St. Louis Superintendency since 1846 and at different times before 1846 had been under the jurisdiction of the Iowa, Wisconsin, St. Louis, and Michigan Superintendencies.

The St. Peters Agency was established in 1819. No specific tribes or geographic areas were assigned to the agency, but it assumed responsibility for various bands of Chippewa and Sioux who lived in present day Minnesota and part of Iowa. By 1827 jurisdiction over the Chippewa Indians was transferred to the Sault Ste. Marie Agency, and the St. Peters Agency was responsible primarily for the Sioux Indians known collectively as the

Sioux of the Mississippi to distinguish them from other Sioux living in the Missouri River region who were assigned to the Upper Missouri Agency. The four main bands of Sioux of the Mississippi were Mdewakanton, Wahpekute, Sisseton, and Wahpeton.

The St. Peters Agency was situated at the mouth of the St. Peters (now Minnesota) River, near the site of Minneapolis. In 1851 the Sioux of the Mississippi ceded to the United States their land in Minnesota and Iowa except for reserves along the Minnesota River in western Minnesota. Most of the Indians moved to the reserves during 1853. By 1854 the St. Peters Agency was established near the mouth of the Redwood River on the reserve for the Mdewakanton and Wahpekute (or Lower) Sioux. Agency buildings eventually were constructed at Yellow Medicine on the reserve for the Sisseton and Wahpeton (or Upper) Sioux. The agent divided his time between the two locations that were known, respectively, as the Lower Sioux Agency and the Upper Sioux Agency. For administrative purposes the name "St. Peters" was retained by the Bureau.

In 1840 the Winnebago Indians were removed from their native Wisconsin Territory to a reservation in Iowa Territory and placed under the jurisdiction of the Turkey River Subagency. In 1848 they were moved to a new reservation in central Minnesota west of the Mississippi River in the vicinity of the Watab and Long Prairie Rivers. The Turkey River Subagency accordingly was moved to a site along the Long Prairie River and renamed the Winnebago Subagency. In 1848 it was made a full agency and the St. Peters Agency was reduced to a subagency. The Winnebago Indians were dissatisfied with their reservation and in 1855 they were moved south to a new reserve in the Blue Earth River area. The Winnebago Agency was then moved from the Long Prairie River area to a site on the Le Sueur River about 10 miles from Mankato, Minn.

From 1848 until 1850 the Winnebago Agency also had responsibility for several bands of Chippewa Indians known collectively as the Chippewas of the Mississippi. In 1850 the La Pointe Subagency, which had charge of the Chippewa of Lake Superior in Wisconsin, was moved to Sandy Lake, Minn., in conjunction with the removal of some bands of Chippewa from ceded lands in Wisconsin and Michigan to Minnesota. It was renamed the Sandy Lake Subagency and assumed responsibility for the Chippewa of the Mississippi. On June 30, 1851, Sandy Lake was made a full agency and renamed the Chippewa Agency. In 1852 the agency was moved from the Sandy Lake area to a site along the Crow Wing River, a few miles above its junction with the Mississippi River. After 1853 the jurisdiction for the Chippewa Indians remaining along Lake Superior in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan was transferred to the Mackinac Agency in Michigan. The Chippewa Agency then was responsible for the Chippewa of the Mississippi proper and for the Pillager and Lake Winnibigoshish Chippewa.

The Minnesota Superintendency was discontinued in 1856, and its three agencies were transferred to the Northern Superintendency headquarters that was moved from Milwaukee, Wis., to St. Paul, Minn.

The records of the Minnesota Superintendency relate to almost all aspects of Indian administration within its jurisdiction. There are documents relating to negotiation and enforcement of treaties, land matters, Indian emigration and subsistence, intrusions on Indian lands, law and order, annuity and other payments, inter-tribal hostilities, military operations, depredation claims, traders and licenses, missionaries and schools, location of agencies, construction and repair of buildings, purchase and transportation of goods and supplies, employees, and accounts. Some of the records also concern other Territorial matters.

Most of the correspondence of the superintendency was conducted with the Commissioner of Indian Affairs and with agents and subagents in the superintendency. There was also correspondence with other field officials and employees of the Office of Indian Affairs, the Secretary of War, Army officers, Treasury Department officials, traders, contractors, and Indians. Also included is correspondence with representatives of the half-breed Chippewa settlement at Pembina and some records relating to the investigation of fraud and misconduct charges alleged against Gov. Alexander Ramsey, ex officio superintendent of Indian affairs in Minnesota. A report of the investigation is published as S. Ex. Doc. 61, 33 Cong., 1 sess.--serial 699.

The records reproduced in this microfilm publication consist of two series of records of the Minnesota Superintendency.

1. Letters Received, 1849-56. Also included are such documents as petitions, affidavits, muster rolls, contracts, bonds, bids, invoices, vouchers, estimates, requisitions, receipts for annuity goods, statement of funds remitted, abstracts of disbursements, statements of account current, property returns, and some copies of letters sent. The records are arranged by year, thereunder mainly by source, and thereunder chronologically. Most of the letters received were from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs and the several agencies within the superintendency. There are some variations in the arrangement of the records from year to year.

2. Letters Sent, 1849-56. Handwritten copies arranged in rough chronological order in four volumes. Included are some letters sent by the Governor in that capacity rather than as superintendent. Alphabetical indexes in the first and third volumes are filmed at the beginning of the volumes. The index in the first volume is to names of addressees and to subjects; a name index in the third volume is incomplete.

The records reproduced in this publication are part of the records in the National Archives designated as Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75. Related records in the same record group reproduced on microfilm include Registers of Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824-80 (M18); Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824-80 (M234); Letters Sent by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824-81 (M21); Reports Books of the Office of Indian Affairs, 1838-85 (M348); Documents Relating to the Negotiation of Ratified and Unratified Treaties With Various Tribes of Indians, 1801-69 (T494); and Special Files of the Office of Indian Affairs, 1807-1904 (M574).

Records have also been microfilmed for other superintendencies: Arizona, 1863-73 (M734); Michigan, 1814-51 (M1); New Mexico, 1849-80 (T21); Oregon, 1848-73 (M2); Washington, 1853-74 (M5); and Southern Superintendency, 1832-70 (M640).

The records reproduced in this microfilm publication were prepared for filming by Robert M. Kvasnicka who also wrote these introductory remarks and provided other editorial material.

LIST OF OFFICIALS
1849-56
AND
DATE OF APPOINTMENT

Commissioners of Indian Affairs

William Medill	Oct. 28, 1845
Orlando Brown	June 30, 1849
Luke Lea	July 1, 1850
George W. Many penny	Mar. 24, 1853

Governors and Ex Officio Superintendents

Alexander Ramsey	Apr. 2, 1849
Willis A. Gorman	Apr. 1, 1853

Agents

St. Peters Agency

Richard G. Murphy (subagent)	May 5, 1848
Nathaniel McLean (subagent)	Nov. 7, 1849
(agent)	June 30, 1851
Richard G. Murphy (agent)	Apr. 18, 1853

Winnebago Agency

Jonathan E. Fletcher	May 18, 1848
Abram M. Fridley	Notified Nov. 11, 1850
Jonathan E. Fletcher	Apr. 18, 1853

La Pointe Subagency

John Livermore	May 24, 1848
John S. Watrous	Apr. 20, 1850

Sandy Lake Subagency

John S. Watrous	Apr. 20, 1850
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Chippewa Agency

John S. Watrous	June 30, 1851
David B. Herriman	Apr. 18, 1853

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1	1849 Letters received from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs; letters received relating to the St. Peters Subagency, mission schools for the Sioux, the Winnebago Agency, and the Winnebago School; and miscellaneous letters received
2	1850 Letters received from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs; letters received relating to the St. Peters Subagency, the Winnebago Agency, the Winnebago School, Winnebago Removal, and the Sandy Lake Subagency; and miscellaneous letters received
3	1851 Letters received from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs; letters received relating to the St. Peters Agency, the Winnebago Agency, the Winnebago School, and the Chippewa Agency; and miscellaneous letters received
4	1852 Letters received from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs; letters received relating to the St. Peters Agency, the Winnebago Agency, the Winnebago School, and the Chippewa Agency; and miscellaneous letters received
5	1853 Letters received from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs; letters received relating to the St. Peters Agency, the Winnebago Agency, the Winnebago School, and the Chippewa Agency; miscellaneous letters received; records relating to the investigation of charges against Governor Ramsey; and the superintendent's annual report
6	1854 Letters received from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs; letters received relating to the St. Peters Agency, the Winnebago Agency, and the Chippewa Agency; miscellaneous letters received, and the superintendent's annual report
7	1855 Letters received from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs; letters received relating to the St. Peters Agency, the Winnebago Agency, the Winnebago School, and the Chippewa Agency; and miscellaneous letters received

RollDescription

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1856

Letters received from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs; letters received relating to the St. Peters Agency, the Winnebago Agency, the Winnebago School, and the Chippewa Agency; and miscellaneous letters received

Letters sent:

Volumes [1] and [2], June 18, 1849-May 17, 1853

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Volumes [3] and [4], May 20, 1853-Apr. 11, 1856